

THE BAKHTYAR NAMEH,

OR

STORY

OF

PRINCE BAKHTYAR

AND

THE TEN VIZIERS;

A SERIES OF

PERSIAN TALES.

FROM A MANUSCRIPT
IN THE COLLECTION OF
SIR WILLIAM OUSELEY.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

Whatever opinion may be formed of these Tales by the European Reader, it appears that they are popular favourites among the Asiaticks, from the number of copies which have been transcribed: Besides three in my own possession, I have seen five or six in the collections of various friends. From all those Manuscripts (as this work is chiefly designed for the use of those who begin to study the Persian language) I selected that which seemed written in the most pure and simple style; for several copies, in passing through the hands of ignorant or conceited transcribers, have suffered a considerable depravation of the orginal text; and one, in particular, is so disguised by the alterations, and augmented by the additions of some Indian Moonshee, that it appears almost a different work. These additions, however, are only turgid amplifications and florid exuberancies, according to the modern corrupt style of Hindoostan, which distinguishes the compositions of that country from the chaste and classical productions of *Iran*.

Of the author or age of the *Bakhtyar Nameh*, I have not been able to acquire any information. Most of the

copies which I have seen, are modern transcripts; none of them much older than an hundred years.

This Work is so easy, that it has not seemed necessary to augment its bulk by notes: nor, although the translation will be found sufficiently literal, have I retained those idioms which would be not only uncouth, but perhaps unintelligible in English. Some repetitions I have taken the liberty of omitting; and, as most of the stories begin and end nearly in the same manner, I have, on such occasions, compressed into a few lines the subject of a page.

It is proper to observe, (as I have referred to this advertisement,) that almost all the names of persons which occur in the following pages are characteristick and descriptive compounds or epithets. Thus the name of *Bakht-yar* is compounded of *Bakht*, fortune, luck, &c. and *yar*, a friend or companion; and may be translated, "The person whom Fortune favours," or "Fortune's friend." *Azad Bakht* is also a compound, equivalent to the word *fortunate Sipeh-salar* used as a proper name in the first story, signifies a general, or the leader of an army. *Beh-rooz*, and *Rooz-beh*, are compounded of *Rooz*, day, and *beh*, good, excellent, &c.

WILLIAM OUSELEY.

London, Jan. 20, 1801.

THE

BAKHTYAR NAMEH:

OR,

STORY OF PRINCE BAKHTYAR

AND THE TEN VIZIERS.

CHAPTER I.

THUS it is recorded by the authors of remarkable histories, and the narrators of delightful tales, that there was once in the country of Seiestan a certain king, possessing a crown and a throne, whose name was *Azadbakht*; and he had a vizier entitled *Sipehsalar*, a person of such bravery and skill that the moon concealed herself among the clouds from fear of his scymitar. This vizier had a daughter endowed with such exquisite beauty that the rose of the garden and the moon of the heavenly

spheres were confounded at the superior lustre of her cheeks. Sipehsalar loved this daughter with excessive fondess, so that he could scarcely exist an hour without her. Having gone on an expedition to inspect the state of the country, it happened that he found himself under a necessity of passing some time from home. He immediately dispatched confidential persons with orders to bring his daughter to him from the capital. These persons, having arrived at the vizier's palace, paid their obeisance to the damsel, who ordered her attendants to prepare for the journey to her father. The horses were covered with cloths instantly caparisoned, and a litter provided with magnificence suitable to a princely traveller. The damsel, seated in this, commenced her journey, and went forth from the city.

It happened that the king, who had gone on a hunting-party, was at that moment returning from the chace. He beheld the litter with its ornaments and splendid decorations; and, whilst he gazed, it was borne quite out of the town. He sent to inquire about it; and the attendants said that it belonged to the daughter of Sipehsalar, who was going to her father. When the king's servants returned and reported to him this intelligence, he rode up to the litter that he might send his compli-

ments to Sipehsalar. On his approach, the attendants alighted from their horses and kissed the ground of respectful obedience. The king, (having desired that they would bear his salutations to the vizier, and they having promised punctually to do so,) was preparing to turn back, when suddenly, the wind lifting up a corner of the hangings which covered the litter, his eyes were fixed by the fascinating beauty of the damsel; and he who in the chace had sought for game, became now the captive prey of this lovely maid, and fell into the snares of love. At length he ordered the attendants to dispatch a messenger to the north, where Sipehsalar was, and to inform him that the king would accept his daughter as a wife, hoping that he might not be esteemed an unworthy son-in-law.

When the attendants heard this, they kissed the ground of obedience, saying, "Long be the king's life! the "sovereign of the earth and of the age, and the ruler of "the world! If Sipehsalar could even dream of this ho-"nour, he would be supreme in happiness. But, if the "king permit, we will proceed with the damsel to her "father, and inform him of what has happened, that he "may prepare every thing necessary for the occasion, "and then send her back to the city." When the ser-

vant of the damsel had thus spoken, the king, who was displeased with his discourse, exclaimed, "How darest thou presume to counsel or advise me?" He would have punished the servant on the spot, but he feared lest the tender heart of his fair mistress should be distressed thereby. He accordingly remitted the punishment; and, taking the reins into his own hands, he conducted the litter back towards the city, which he entered at the time when the shades of evening began to fall.

The next day he assembled the magistrates and chief men; and, having asked the damsel's consent to the marriage, he caused the necessary ceremonies to be performed. The secretaries were employed in writing letters of congratulation; and Sipehsalar was informed of the insult offered to him during his absence, which caused the tears to flow from his eyes whilst he perused the letters of congratulation. He dissembled, however; and, concealing his vexation, wrote letters to the king, and addressed him in language of the strongest gratitude, declaring himself at a loss for words whereby to express his sense of the honour conferred upon him.

Such was the purport of his letters; but in his mind he cherished hopes of revenge, and day and night were em-

ployed in devising stratagems by means of which he might obtain it.

After two or three months spent in this manner, Sipehsalar assembled all the chief officers of the army, and informed them, that, confiding in their secresy and fidelity, he would communicate to them an affair of considerable importance : they all assured him of their attachment and regard ; and declared, that the flourishing state of the empire was the result of his wisdom, prudent management, and bravery. To this Sipehsalar replied, " You all know what actions I have performed, and what " troubles I have undergone, to raise the empire to its " present state of glory and prosperity : But what has been " my recompense ? You have seen how the ungrateful mo- " narch carried off my daughter. " Having thus spoken, a shower of tears fell from his eyes ; and the chiefs, who were assembled about him, said, " We have been acquain- " ted with this matter for some time, and it has given " us great concern. But now the moment is arrived " when we may depose this king."

Then Sipehsalar threw open the doors of his treasury, and distributed considerable sums of money amongst the soldiers ; so that in a little time he assembled a multitude

of troops, almost innumerable. He then resolved to attack the king, and with that intention seized, during the night, upon all the avenues of the city, both on the right hand and on the left.

The king, astonished and alarmed at the tumult, consulted with the queen, saying, "What can we do in this "misfortune? for it is a night to which no morning shall "succeed, and a war in which there is not any hope of "peace."— The queen replied "Our only remedy for "this evil is to fly and seek protection in the dominions "of some other prince, and solicit his assistance." Azadbakht approved of this counsel, and resolved to seek an asylum from the king of *Kirman*, who was renowned for his generosity throughout the world.

In the palace there was a certain door which opened into a subterraneous passage leading towards the desert. The king gave orders that two horses should be instantly saddled; and having put on his armour, and taken from the royal treasury many precious jewels, and fastened them in his girdle, he placed the queen on one of the horses, and, mounting the other himself, they went forth privately through the door above mentioned, and directed their course towards the desert.

Now it happened that the queen had been for nine months in a state of pregnancy; and, after travelling during a whole day and night in the desert, they arrived at the side of a well, whose waters were more bitter than poison, and unpleasant as the revolutions of inconstant fortune. Here the queen was affected by the pains of labour; whilst heat and thirst reduced both the king and her to despair: their mouths were parched up for want of water, and they had no hopes of saving their lives; for the sword of the enemy was behind them, and before them the sand of the desert.

In this forlorn situation the queen said, "As it is impossible for me to proceed any farther, I intreat you "to save your own life, and find out some place where "water may be obtained. Though I must perish here, "you may be saved; and an hundred thousand lives "such as mine are not in value equal to a single hair "of the king's head." Azadbakht replied, "Soul of "the world! can relinquish riches and resign a throne; "but it is impossible to abandon my beloved—her who "is dearer to me than existence itself."

Thus were they engaged in conversation, when suddenly the queen brought forth a son: in beauty he was

lovely as the moon; and from the lustre of his eyes the dark desert was illumined. The queen, pressing the infant to her bosom, began to perform the duties of a mother, when the king told her that she must not fix her affections on the child, as it would be impossible to take him with them: "We must, therefore," added the king, "leave the infant on the brink of this well, and commit him to the providence of the Almighty, whose infinite kindness will save him from destruction."—They accordingly wrapped up the child in a cloak embroidered with gold, and fastened a bracelet of ten large pearls round his shoulders; then leaving him on the brink of the well, they both proceeded on their journey to Kirman, whilst their hearts were afflicted with anguish on account of their helpless infant. When they approached the capital of Kirman, the king of that place was informed of their arrival. He sent his servants to welcome them, and received them with the greatest respect and hospitality: he provided a princely banquet, and assembled all the minstrels, and sent his own son and two attendants to wait on Azadbakht.

During the feast, whilst the musicians were employed in singing and playing, and the guests in drinking, whenever the wine came round to Azadbakht, his eyes were

filled with tears. The king of Kirman, perceiving this desired him to banish sorrow, and to entertain a hope that Heaven might yet be propitious to him. Azadbakht replied, "Oh, king of the world! how can I be cheerful "whilst thus an exile from my home, and whilst my "kingdom and my treasures are in the possession of "my enemies?"

The king of Kirman then inquired into the particulars of Azadbakht's misfortunes, which he related from beginning to end. The heart of the king of Kirman was moved with compassion; and, during that whole day he endeavoured, by every sort of amusement, to divert the mind of his guest from dwelling on the past misfortunes. The next day he ordered a powerful army to be led forth, and placed it under the command of Azadbakht, who marched immediately towards the capital of his own dominions. On the king's approach, Sipehsalar, who had usurped his authority, fled in confusion, and all the troops, the peasants, and other inhabitants, paid homage to Azadbakht, and entreated his forgiveness. He pardoned them; and again ascending the royal throne governed his people with justice and generosity; and having liberally rewarded the king of Kirman's soldiers, he sent them back with many rare and valuable presents.

for that monarch.

After these transactions, Azadbakht and his queen passed their time in a state of tranquillity, interrupted only by the remembrance of the child whom they had left in the desert, and whom, they were persuaded, the wild beasts must have devoured the same hour in which they abandoned him: but they little knew the kindness which Providence had shewn him.

It happened that the desert in which they had left the infant was frequented by a gang of robbers, the chief of whom was named *Firokh Suvar*: and, very soon after the king and queen had departed, these robbers came to the well; there they discovered a beautiful infant crying bitterly. Firokh Suvar alighted from his horse and took up the child; and his extraordinary beauty induced them to believe him the son of some prince or illustrious personage. In this opinion they were confirmed by the ten valuable pearls which where fastened on his shoulders. As Firokh Suvar had not any child, he resolved to adopt this infant as his own, and accordingly bestowed on him the name of *Khodadad*; and, having taken him to his home, committed him to the care of a nurse. When he was of a proper age, Firokh Suvar instructed him in all

necessary accomplishments, and in horsemanship and the use of arms, which rendered him, with his natural bravery, when fifteen years of age, able to fight, alone, five hundred men. Firokh Suvar loved this youth with such affection that he could not exist one moment without him, and took him along with him wheresoever he went. Whenever it happened that the robbers were proceeding to attack a caravan, Khodadad, who felt compassion for the merchants and travellers, and at all times disliked the profession of a robber, requested that Firokh Suvar might dispense with his attendance, and leave him to guard the castle. Firokh Suvar consented that he should not join in attacking the caravan ; but entreated him to accompany, the robbers to the scene of action. it happened, however, one day that they attacked a caravan consisting of superior numbers of such brave men that they fought against the robbers with success, and took several of them prisoners. In this action Firokh Suvar received a wound, and was near falling into the hands of his enemies, when Khodadad, mounting his charger, galloped into the midst of the battle, and put many of them to death.

But it was so ordained that he should fall from his horse: in consequence of which, he was taken prisoner and, with many of the robbers, led in chains to the city.

The chief of the caravan having brought them all before the tribunal of Azadbakht, the king's eyes were no sooner fixed upon the countenance of Khodadad, than paternal affection began to affect his heart: he wept, and said, "Alas! if the infant whom I abandoned in the desert "were now alive he would probably appear such a "youth as this!" He continued to gaze involuntarily upon him, and, desiring him to approach, inquired his name, and said, "Art thou not ashamed to have abused "the favours of heaven, which has endowed thee with so "much beauty and strength, by plundering travellers "and seizing on the property to which thou hadst not a-"ny right?"—Khodadad, with tears, replied, "The Lord "knows my innocence, and that I have never partaken "of the plunder." Azadbakht then granted him a free pardon, and took him into his service, desiring that his chains might be taken off: he also put on him his own robe, and said, "I now give you the name of Bakhtyar; "from this time forth fortune shall be your friend *". The king then dismissed the other robbers; to whom, on condition that they would never again commit any depredations, he granted not only their lives, but a pension by which he engaged them in his service.

After this, Bakhtyar continued day and night in at-

* In allusion to the name, compounded of *Bakht* "fortune," and *yar* "a friend or companion."

tendance on the king, whose affection for him hourly increased. To his care were entrusted the royal stables, which he superintended with such skill and good management, that in a few months the horses became fat and sleek; and the king one day remarking their improved condition, understood that it was the result o Bakhtyar's care and attention, and conceiving that a person who evinced such abilities was capable of managing more important matters, he sent for Bakhtyar, at his return to the palace, and ordered that the keys of the treasury should be presented to him, and thus constituted him keeper of the treasures. Bakhtyar, having kissed the ground, was invested with a splendid robe of honour. He discharged the duties of his high station with such fidelity and attention, that he every day increased in favour with the king, and at length was consulted on every measure, and entrusted with every secret of his royal master. If on any day it happened that Bakhtyar absented himself from the palace, on that day the king would not give audience to any person: and the advice of Bakhtyar was followed on every occasion of importance. In short, he was next in power to the king; and his conduct was discreet and skilful.

But there were ten viziers, who became envious of his exaltation, and conspired against him, resolving to devise some stratagem whereby they might deprive him of the king's esteem, and effect his degradation.

It happened one day that Bakhtyar, having indulged in the pleasures of wine beyond the bounds of moderation, lost the power of

his reason, and continued in a state of sleepy intoxication until night came on and the world became dark: the porters fastened the gates, and the sentinels repaired to their respective stations. Bakhtyar, after some time, came forth from the treasury, but knew not whither he went; so completely had the wine deprived him of recollection: he wandered on, however, until he found himself in one of the king's private apartments, where he saw tapers burning, a couch with pillows and cushions, a splendid throne or seat, and various embroidered robes and silken coverings. This was the apartment in which the king used to sleep. Here, from excessive intoxication, Bakhtyar flung himself upon the throne; after a little while the king entered, and discovering the unfortunate young man, inquired, with violent anger, his business in that place. Bakhtyar, roused; by the noise, threw himself from the throne, and crept beneath it where again he fell asleep.

The king, having called some attendants, ordered them to seize him, and, drawing his sword, hastened to the queen, of whom he asked how Bakhtyar found admittance to the private apartments of the palace; and added, that he could not have come there without her knowledge. The queen, shocked at such an imputation, declared herself ignorant of the whole transaction; but desired that the king, if he still entertained any suspicions, to confine her that night, and inquire into the matter on the next morning, when her innocence would appear, and the guilty might be punished. The king, accordingly, ordered her to be confined, and suspended the execution of vengeance during that night. When morning came, being seated

on the royal throne, he gave audience to his ten viziers. The first of these, having paid his respects to the king, inquired into the transactions of the preceding night, and was informed of all that had occurred. The enmity which this vizier had long cherished in his heart against Bakhtyar induced him to conceive that a fair opportunity now offered of destroying that unfortunate young man: and said within himself, "Though he may have a thousand lives, he shall "not be able to save one of them." He then addressed the king, and said, "How could a person bred up in the desert, and by pro-"fession a robber and assassin, be fit for the service of a king? "I well knew that his wickedness would appear, but durst not say "so; now, however, that it is manifest, let the king ordain for "him such a punishment as may be a lesson to all the world.; The king gave orders that Bakhtyar should be brought before "him:—"Ungrateful wretch!" said he, "I forgave your offences; I "spared your life; I raised you to dignities almost equal to my own "and you requite these favours by treason and perfidy: you have "entered into the recesses of my haram, and have presumed to occu-"py my palace." Bakhtyar, on hearing this, began to weep; declared himself ignorant of all those transactions, and that if he had been found in the royal apartments, he must have wandered there unconsciously.

The first vizier solicited the king, s permission, that he might go to the haram, and inquire from the queen all that she knew concerning this affair. Having obtained permission, he went to the queen, and told her, that there were various reports on the subject of that

young robber Bakhtyar, in which she was implicated; that as the king was exceedingly enraged against her, the only means whereby she could appease his anger would be to accuse Bakhtyar, and to say, "O king! thou hast brought hither the son of a rob-"ber, thou hast bestowed on him the name of *Fortune's favourite*, "and hast exalted him to honours; but his baseness has at length "appeared, he has presumed to make amorous proposals to me, and "has threatened, should I not comply with his licentious desires, "to use violenec with me, to kill the king, and to seize upon the "throne."

"This declaration," said the vizier to the queen "will induce the "king to order the immediate execution of Bakhtyar, and you "will at the same time re-establish yourself in his good opini-on."Thequeen was astonished, and replied, "How can I, even to "save my-self thus destroy the life of an innocent person by a "false testimony?"

"The life of Bakhtyar," said the vizier, "has long been forfei-"ted to the laws, since he exercised the profession of a robber and "a murderer : therefore, any scruples on that subject are vain; "and I'll answer at the day of judgment for your share in this tran-"saction." The queen at last consented to follow the vizier's advice; and he returned to the presence of the king, who desired to know the result of his conference with the queen. The artful vizier replied, "That which I have heard, I have not the power of relating; "but the queen herself will tell it." The king having retired, sent

for the queen, and she repeated to him all that the vizier had instructed her to say. The king, acknowledging that he was himself to blame, as having bestowed favours on the base born son of a robber, gave orders that heavy irons should be put on the feet of Bakhtyar, and sent him to prison, declaring, that in due time he should suffer such a punishment as would strike terror into all men. In the mean time, Bakhtyar languished in the prison, applying to God for relief; and the viziers returned to their homes, devising means whereby they might induce the king to hasten the execution of the young man.

CHAPTER II.

Story of the ill-fated Merchant, and his Adventures.

ON the following day the second vizier came before the king, and, having paid his respects, recommended that Bakhtyar should be no longer kept in prison, but led out to execution. The king approved of this advice, and gave orders that Bakhtyar and the executioner should be brought before him. When they were come, he addressed the young man, and told him that he had directed the tree of his existence to be rooted out from the soil of his empire. Bakhtyar replied, " Long be the king's life! Such is my prayer, as I stand here on the eve of departure from this world; yet, as it is every man's duty to endeavour by honest means to save himself, I appeal to the Almighty, who knows my innocence; but, alas! my situation is like that of the merchant, whom good fortune constantly avoided, and evil fortune incessantly pursued, so that all his exertions ended in disappointment, and all his projects failed of success." The king desired to hear the story of this ill-fated merchant, and Bakhtyar, after the usual compliments, began to relate it as follows:

"In the city of Basrah there was a certain man, a merchant, who possessed immense riches; but it was decreed, that the light of prosperity should be changed into the darkness of misfortune, so that in a short space of time very little of all his wealth remained, and whatsoever commercial projects he tried invariably terminated in loss. It happened, one year, that the price of corn was increased, and the merchant thought, that, by laying out what remained of his money in purchasing some loads of corn, and keeping it till the next year, he might profit considerably: he therefore hired a granary, purchased some corn, and laid it by in expectation that the price would rise; but corn became more abundant, and consequently more cheap, the following season: when the merchant perceived this, he resolved to keep that which he had in store until the next year, thinking it probable that a barren season might be succeeded by a plentiful one. But it happened that the next year, so much rain fell, that most of the houses were washed away, and the water found its way into the merchant's granary, where it spoiled all his corn, and caused it to send forth a smell so intolerable, that the people of the city compelled him to throw it away. He was confounded by this misfortune; but after some time, finding that he could not derive any profit from idleness or inactivity, he sold his house, and joined a company of merchants, who were setting out on a voyage by sea. With them he embarked on board a vessel, and after three days and three nights, the world became dark, the tempest arose, the billows rolled, and at length the ship was wrecked; many of the crew perished. The merchant, with a few others, was saved on a plank, and cast on dry land; hungry and naked, he wandered into a desert,

when, after advancing some leagues, he discovered a man at a little distance. Delighted to find that the country was inhabited, and hoping to be relieved from hunger and thirst, which had now become almost insupportable, he directed his course towards that man, and soon perceived an extensive and populous village, with trees and running streams; at this entrance of the village, he stopped: the chief man, or *dihkan* of the place, was a person of considerable wealth, and of great generosity; he had erected, in the outlets of this village, a summer-house, in which he happened to be when the merchant arrived. As soon as he discovered the stranger, he ordered his servants to bring him into the summer-house. The stranger paid his respects, and was entertained by the dihkan with politeness and hospitality. Having satisfied his hunger and thirst, he related, at the desire of his host, all the circumstances of his past life, and all the misfortunes he had undergone. The story excited compassion in the breast of the generous dihkan, who gave the merchant a suit of his own clothes, and bade him not despair, for that he would keep him with himself until his affairs should be again in a prosperous condition.

"After this, the dihkan gave into the merchant's charge the account of his property and possesion, and said that he would allow him, for his own share, the eleventh part of all the corn. The merchant, much delighted, was very diligent in superintending the concerns of his employer; and as the harvest proved very abundant, when the corn was gathered in, he found his portion so considerable, that he said within himself, 'the dihkan most probably will

not consent to allow me such a share, I shall therefore take it, and conceal it, until the settlement of accounts, when, if he think proper to bestow so much on me, I shall give back this:' he accordingly took this quantity of the corn, and concealed it in a cavern; but it happened that a chief discovered what he had done, and stole the corn away by night.

"When the dihkan inspected the accounts of the harvest, and and had made his calculations of the produce, he assigned to the merchant the eleventh part of the corn. The merchant returned him thanks, and acknowledged the doubts which he had entertained, and told him how he had set apart a certain portion of the corn, 'which,' said he, 'I shall now go and cause to be deposited in the granary.'

"The dihkan sent two of his people with him to the place where he had concealed the corn, but none could be found. They were astonished, and bit the finger of amazement. When the dihkan was informed of this circumstance, he became angry, and ordered that the merchant should be driven forth out of the village.

"In melancholy plight the unlucky merchant turned his face towards the road which led to the sea-shore: there he chanced to meet six of those persons who gain a livelihood by diving for pearls. They knew him, and inquired into his situation: he related to them all that had happened, and his story so much excited their compassion that they agreed to bestow on him, for the sake

of God, whatsoever their next descent to the bottom of the sea should produce. They accordingly, with this charitable intention, plunged all six into the sea, and each brought up from the bottom a pearl of such exquisite beauty that its equal could not be found amongst the treasures of any monarch. The merchant received from the divers those six precious pearls, and set forward with a joyful heart.

"It happened that after some time he fell into company with certain robbers, whom he much feared; and he resolved to save part, at least, of his property, by concealing three of the pearls in his mouth, and the other three among his clothes, hoping that, if they should search him, they might be contented with these, and that he might save those concealed within his mouth. He accordingly put three of the pearls among his clothes, and the other three into his mouth; and went on for some time without exciting any suspicion, or attracting the notice of the robbers. But unluckily opening his mouth to address them, the pearls fell on the ground; and when the robbers saw them, they seized the merchant, and so terrified him with their threats and violence that he became senseless. The robbers, perceiving this, took up the three pearls and went away. After some time the merchant recovered his senses, and was overjoyed to find that he had still three of the pearls left. Proceeding on his journey, he arrived by night at a certain city, where he slept; and next morning went to the shop of a jeweller, to whom he offered the pearls for sale. The jeweller, on beholding them, was astonished; for they far exceeded any thing he

had ever seen: then casting his eyes on the mean and squalid garments of the merchant, he immediately seized him by the collar, and exclaimed with a loud voice, accusing the unfortunate stranger of having stolen the pearls from his shop; a violent struggle and dispute ensued, and at length they both proceeded to the tribunal of the king.

"The jeweller was a man of some repute in the city; and that which he said, was believed by the inhabitants: he accused the merchant of having contrived a hole through which he stole away a casket of gold and jewels from his shop, and those three pearls were part of the contents of the casket.

"The merchant declared himself innocent; but the king ordered him to deliver the pearls to the jeweller, and he was loaded with chains and thrown into prison: there he pined in misery and affliction, until after some time those divers who had given him the pearls arrived in that city, and going to visit the prison, that they might benefit by seeing the punishment of vice and wickedness, they distributed some money among those who were confined, and at last discovered the merchant in a corner loaded with chains; they were astonished, and inquired into the occasion of his disgrace: he related the whole affair, and they feeling great indignation on account of the injurious treatment which their friend had suffered, desired him not to despair, as they would soon procure him his liberty.

"They immediately hastened from the prison to the palace, and

the chief of them was a man whom the king much respected; and when he had related the story of the merchant, and of the pearls which they had given him, the king became convinced of the jeweller's guilt, and instantly ordered him to be seized and brought before him, and at the same time that the merchant should be released from prison. When the jeweller appeared before the king, his confusion and trembling betrayed his guilt: the king asked him why he had thus injured a stranger? but he remained silent; and was then led away to execution. The king caused to be proclaimed throughout the city, 'Such is to be the punishment of those who shall injure or do wrong to strangers.'

"He directed, also, that the property of the jeweller should be transferred to the merchant. Supposing that a man who had seen so much of the world, both of prospersty and adversity, mnst be well qualified for the service of a king, he ordered a splendid robe to be given to the merchant, and desired that he should be purified from the filth of a prison in a warm bath, and appointed him keeper of the treasury.

"The merchant employed himself diligently in the duties of his station; but there was a vizier who became envious of his good fortune, and resolved to devise some stratagem whereby to effect his ruin.

"The king's daughter had a summer-house adjoining the Treasury, and it was her custom to visit this summer-house, du-

ring six months of the year, once every month. It happened that a mouse had made a hole quite through the wall of the Treasury; and one day the merchant having occasion to drive a nail into the wall, it entered into the hole which the mouse had made, and went through and caused a brick to fall out on the road which led to the princess's summer-house. The merchant went immediately and stopped up the hole with clay.

"The malicious vizier, having discovered this circumstance, hastened to the king, and informed him that he had seen the merchant making a hole through the wall of the summer-house, and that when he had found himself detected, he had, in shame and confusion, stopped it up with clay. The king was astonished at this information: he arose and proceeded to the Treasury, where, finding the merchant's hands yet dirty from the clay, he believed what the vizier had told him, and, on returning to his palace, ordered his attendants to put out the merchant's eyes, and to turn him out at the palace-gate. After this the king went to the summer-house, that he might pay a visit to his daughter; but he found that she had not been there for some time, having gone to amuse herself in the gardens. On proceeding to the Treasury, the king discovered the hole, which had evidently been the work of a mouse: from these circumstances he began to suspect the truth of the vizier's information, and at last being convinced that the merchant was innocent, he ordered the vizier to be punished. He lamented exceedingly the hard fate of the merchant, and was much grieved at his own precipitancy; but his condolence and his sorrow were of no avail."

Having related this story, Bakhtyar observed, that the king would have prevented all this distress had he taken some time to inquire into the affair, and entreated a further respite, that he might be enabled to prove his innocence.

The king, being pleased with the recital of this story, complied with Bakhtyar's request, and ordered him to be taken back to prison for that day.

CHAPTER III.

Story of the King of Aleppo.

ON the following morning the third vizier presented himself before the king, and, having paid his respects, expressed many apprehensions that the indulgence shewn to Bakhtyar might prove of dangerous consequences, by encouraging other criminals, and strongly advised his speedy execution. The king having sent for Bakhtyar, the executioner prepared to blindfold him; but he petitioned for mercy, and said, "The imprisonment of suspected persons is certainly a just measure, as the guilt or innocence of the prisoner will probably be ascertained in the course of time; but if a king will not have patience, but punish without due investigation of the offence, what can result from such precipitancy but affliction and repentance? Thus it happened to a son of the king of Aleppo, whose impatience occasioned the loss of that kingdom, and infinite misery."

The king's curiosity being excited, he desired Bakhtyar to relate the story of the impatient prince of Aleppo: and Bakhtyar, having kissed the ground of obedience, thus began:—

"The king of Aleppo was an upright and generous monarch, who protected strangers, and permitted not any person to oppress or

insult another : and he häd a son named *Behzad*, a young man of excellent genius, polite accomplishments, and many good qualities ; but so very impatient, that he would not admit a moment's delay in the gratification of any desire, whatsoever might be the consequences of his rash haste. It happened once, that, being seated with several of his companions, he desired one of them to relate his adventures. The young man accordingly began his story in the following words :

'About two years ago, being in possession of considerable wealth, I purchased several beasts of burthen, and, having loaded them with various commodities, I undertook a journey ; but on the way was attacked by robbers, who plundered me of all my property, and I proceeded with a disconsolate heart until night came on, and I found myself in a place without any vestige of inhabitants. I took shelter beneath a great tree, and had remained there for some time, when I perceived a light, and several persons, who passed by with much festivity and mirth. After them came some who held vessels full of burning incense, so very fragrant that the desert was perfumed by its delightful odour. When they had passed on, a magnificent litter appeared, before which walked several damsels holding torches scented with ambergris. In the litter was seated a fair-one of such exquisite beauty, that the radiance of her charms far exceeded the light of the torches, and quite dazzled my fascinated eyes.'

" When the young man had advanced thus far in his narrative, Behzad began to shew symptoms of impatience, having fallen in love with the lady though unseen.

"The young man continued his story, and said: 'The next morning I proceeded on my journey, and arrived at the city of *Roum*, the capital and residence of the *kaisar*, or Greek emperor; and, having made inquiries, I was informed that the lovely damsel whom I had seen was the princess *Negarin*, daughter of the kaisar, who had a villa at a little distance from the city, to which she sometimes went for recreation.' refreshment of the strength & spirit after toil

"Here the young man concluded his narrative; and Prince Behzad immediately arose and hastened to the house of the vizier, and said, 'You must go this moment to my father and tell him that, if he is solicitous about my happiness, he will provide me a wife without delay.' The vizier accordingly went to the palace and informed the king of Behzad's wishes. The king desired the vizier to assure the prince that he only waited to find a suitable match for him; but that if he had fixed his affections on any fair object, he would do every thing in his power to obtain her for him. This being reported to Behzad, he sent back the vizier with another message to the king, informing him that the object of his choice was the princess Negarin, the lovely daughter of the kaisar of Roum, and requesting that ambassadors might be sent to ask her in marriage for him. The king replied to this message, and said: 'Tell Behzad that it were in vain for me to send ambassadors on such an errand to the kaisar: he is a powerful emperor of Roum, and I only the petty sovereign of Aleppo: we are of different religions, and of different manners; and there is not any probability that he would comply with our demand.'

"The vizier returned to Behzad, and delivered him this message from his father. The impatient prince immediately declared, that if the king would not send ambassadors to solicit the kaisar's daughter inmarriage for him, he would set out on that errand himself.

"The king, being informed of his son's resolution, sent for the prince, whom he loved with a tender affection, and at last consented that ambassadors should be dispatched to Roum. The kaisar received with due respect the ambassadors from the king of Aleppo; but when they disclosed the object of their mission, he replied with great indignation, and informed them that no one should obtain his daughter without paying the sum of an hundred lacks of *dinars*, or pieces of gold; and that whoever should consent to pay that sum might become her husband. The ambassadors returned to Aleppo, and related to the king all that the kaisar had said. 'Did I not tell you,' said the king to Behzad, 'that the Greek emperor would refuse his consent to so unequal a match?'—'He has not refused his consent,' replied Behzad; 'but he requires money, which must be immediately sent.' The king declared that he could not make up so considerable a sum: but, at Behzad's request, having collected all his wealth, he found he possesed thirty lacks. Behzad then urged him to sell his male and female slaves, and all his household goods. Having done so, he found that they produced twenty lacks. then Behzad advised the king to make up the requisite sum, by compelling his subjects to contribute their money; but the king was not willing to distress his people. However, by the persuasion of Behzad, he extorted from them an additional sum of twenty lacks. Having thus collected seventy lacks of dinars,

Behzad proposed that they should be immediately transmitted to the kaisar of Roum. Letters were accordingly written, and messengers dispatched with the money, who were instructed to say that the remaining sum of thirty lacks should speedily be sent after.

" When these messengers arrived at Roum, they presented the letters and gifts to the kaisar, with the money. He treated the messengers with great respect, accepted the money, and agreed to the proposed conditions: after which they returned to Aleppo, and reported their success. Behzad urged his father to collect by any means the thirty lacks of dinars still deficient, either by forced loan from the merchants, or by taxing the peasants of the country: but the king advised him to be patient, and wait until they should recover from the effects of the late exactions; and said, ' Youhave already rendered me poor, and now you wish to complete my ruin, and occasion the loss of my kingdom.'

" Behzad desired his father to keep his kingdom, and declared his intention of setting out immediately. The king, much afflicted at the thoughts of his son's departure, entreated him to wait one year, that the people might forget the sums they had already paid: but Behzad would not consent. The king then begged that he would be patient for six months: this also he refused. ' Wait even three months,' said his father. ' I cannot wait three days,' said the impatient youth. On which the king, disgusted with such obstinacy, desired his son to go wheresoever he pleased. Behzad immediately retired; and, having clothed himself in armour, with two confidential servants, set

out upon his journey. It happened that one morning they overtook a caravan, consisting of an hundred camels loaded with valuable commodities, proceeding on the way to Roum. The chief of this caravan was a man of considerable wealth, with a numerous train of attendants, and he was held in great esteem by the kaisar. When Behzad and his two companions espied the caravan, they rushed forward with loud shouts, but were instantly seized, and their hands and feet bound: they were then brought before the Chief, who ordered that they should be flung upon a camel. When they arrived at Roum, the Chief took Behzad to his own house, and kept him confined for three days. On the third day, having looked attentively at the young man, he discovered in his air and manner something that bespoke his princely origin and education: he inquired into the circumstances of his adventure: but Behzad answered only with tears. The chief then said, 'If you tell me the truth of this affair, I will set you free; and if you do not, I shall inform the kaisar of your offence, and he will cause you to be hanged.'

" Behzad, not knowing what else to do, related his whole history to the chief of the caravan, who, moved with compassion, desired him not to despair, for that he would lend him the thirty lacks of dinars, and would procure him the kaisar's daughter, on condition of being repaid whenever Behzad should become king.

" To this Behzad gladly consented; and the chief, having untied his fetters, cloathed him in royal garments, and dressed his servants also in splendid attire; and, having given him thirty

lacks of dinars, he led him to the palace: then he left Behzad at the door, whilst he himself went in and informed the kaisar that the Prince of Aleppo was waiting for the honour of presenting to his majesty the thirty lacks of dinars, which he had brought sealed up.

"The kaisar consented to receive Behzad, who, being introduced, paid due homage, and was treated with great kindness, and placed by the kaisar's side. After much conversation, the kaisar desired him to declare the object of his wishes, and promised that whatever it might be he would endeavour to procure it for him. Behzad replied, that his only desire in this world was to obtain the princess for his wife. The kaisar begged that he would wait ten days: but to this delay he would not consent. The kaisar then entreated that he would be patient for five days: this also he refused. 'At least,' said the kaisar, 'wait three days, that the women may have time to make the necessary preparations.' But Behzad would not consent. 'This one day, however,' said the kaisar, 'you must be patient, and to-morrow you shall espouse my daughter.'—'Since it must be so,' replied Behzad, 'I'll wait this day, but no longer.' The kaisar gave orders that the princess should be brought to the garden of the palace, and all the nobles assembled, and banquets provided for the entertainment of Behzad. When night came, Behzad, having indulged in wine, became impatient to behold the princess, and, going to the summerhouse, in which she was, he discovered an aperture in the wall, to which he applied his eye. The princess at that moment happened to perceive the aperture, and found that some person was looking at her through it. She immediately ordered her attendants to burn out his eyes with red-hot irons.

"This order was put in execution without delay. The unhappy Behzad, crying aloud, fell on the ground, deprived of sight. His voice being at length recognized, the servants ran out and beheld him rolling in agony on the ground. They exclaimed, and tore their hair, but all in vain. The news was brought to the kaisar, who said, 'What can be done? This silly youth has brought the evil on himself by his own impatience, and has occasioned the loss of his own eyes.' He then directed that Behzad should be sent back to Aleppo, as he could not give his daughter to a person deprived of sight.

"When the unhappy youth returned to Aleppo, his father and mother, and the inhabitants of the city, all wept at his misfortunes; but their compassion was of no avail. After some time, the king died; but the people introduced a stranger and placed him on the throne, saying, that a blind man was not capable of governing. And the remainder of Behzad's life passed away in misery, and in repentance for his rashness and impatience."

"Now," added Bakhtyar, "had that unfortunate young man waited until night, the princess Negarin would have been his, and he would have saved his eyes and his kingdom, and not have had occasion to repent of impatience. If the king will send me back to prison, he will not be sorry for the delay, as my innocence will hereafter appear: and, if he hasten my execution, any future repentance will not avail."

The king ordered Bakhtyar to go back to prison for that day.

CHAPTER IV.

Story of Abou Saber, the Patient Man.

On the following day, the fourth vizier presented himself before the king, and having paid his respects, advised him not to defer any longer the execution of Bakhtyar. The king immediately gave orders that the young man should be brought from the prison; the executioner with a drawn sword stood ready to perform his part, when Bakhtyar exclaimed, "Long be the king's life! Let him not be precipitate in puting me to death; but as I have, in the story of Behzad, described the fatal consequences of rashness, let me be permitted to celebrate the blessings attendant on forbearance, and recount the adventures of Abou Saber, the patient man." The king's curiosity being excited, he desired Bakhtyar to relate the story, which he accordingly began in the following words:

"There lived in a certain village, a worthy man, whose principal

riches consisted in a good understanding and an inexhaustible stock of patience. On account of those qualifications, he was so much respected by all his neighbours, that his advice was followed on every occasion of importance.

" It happened once, that a tax-gatherer came to this village, and extorted from the poor peasants their miserable pittance, with such circumstances of cruelty and injustice, that they could not any longer submit to the oppression : a number of the young men having assembled in a body, slew the tax-gatherer and fled.

" The other inhabitants, who had not been concerned in this transaction, came to Abou Saber, and begged that he would accompany them to the king, and relate to his majesty the circumstances as they had happened ; but Abou Saber told them, that he had drank of the sherbet of patience, and would not intermeddle in such affairs. When the king was informed of the tax-gatherer's death, he ordered his servants to punish the people of that village, and to strip them of all their property.

" After two years, it happened that a lion took up his abode in the neighbourhood, and destroyed so many children, that no person would venture to cultivate the ground, or attend the harvest, from fear of being devoured. In this distress, the villagers went to Abou Saber, and entreated him to associate with them in some measures for their relief ; but he replied, ' that patience was his only remedy.'

"It happened soon after, that the king, being on a hunting party, arrived in the vicinity of this place; and the inhabitants presenting themselves before him, related the story of the tax-gatherer, the consequences of the king's anger, and their dread of the lion. The king, pitying them, asked why they had not sent some person to inform him of their distresses. They replied, 'That Abou Saber, the chief man of the village, whose assistance they solicited, had declined interfering in the matter.' The king hearing this, was enraged, and gave orders that Abou Saber should be driven forth from the village: these orders were instantly put in execution, and the king sent people to destroy the lion.

"With a heavy heart Abou Saber commenced his journey, accompanied by his wife and two sons: it happened that they were soon overtaken by some robbers, who, not perceiving any thing more valuable of which they might strip him, resolved to carry off the two boys and sell them; they accordingly seized the poor children and bore them away. The wife began to cry and weep most bitterly; but Abou Saber recommended patience. They then proceeded on their journey, and travelled all night and all day, till, faint from hunger and thirst, weary and fatigued, they at length approached a village, in the outlets of which Abou Saber left his wife, whilst he went to procure some food. He was employed on this business in the village, when a robber happened to discover the woman, and seeing that she was a stranger, handsome, and unprotected, he seized her with violence, and declared that he would take her as his wife. After many tears and supplications, (finding the robber determined to carry her away,) she contrived

to write upon the ground with blood which she had procured by biting her own finger. When Abou Saber returned from the village, and sought his wife in the spot where he had left her, the words which she had written sufficiently explained the occasion of her absence.

"He wept at this new misfortune, and implored the Almighty to bestow patience on his wife, and enable her to bear whatever should befal her.

"With a disconsolate heart, Abou Saber proceeded on his solitary journey, until he came to the gate of a certain city where a king resided, who was very tyrannical and impious; and it happened at this time, that he had ordered a summer-house to be erected, and every stranger who approached the city was by his command seized and compelled to work, being guarded day and night, and fed with a scanty portion of coarse black bread.

"Abou Saber was immediately seized and dragged to the building; when a heavy load was placed upon his shoulders, and he was obliged to ascend a ladder of seventy steps. In this distress he consoled himself by reflections on the advantages of patience, the only remedy within his power, for the evils which had occurred.

"It happened, on this day, that the king was sitting in a corner of the building, superintending the work, when he overheard Abou Saber inquire of another man, what time they might expect to be

relieved from this excessive fatigue? The man informed Abou Saber, that it was three months since he had been thus laboriously employed, and languishing for a sight of his beloved wife and children. "During this space of time," added he, "I have not had any intelligence of them; and I long for permission to visit them, were it but for one night." Abou Saber desired him to be patient; for that providence would relieve him at last from the oppression under which he suffered.

"All this conversation the king overheard. After some time, Abou Saber, being faint from excessive fatigue, fell senseless from the steps of the ladder, by which accident his legs and arms were dislocated. The king, however, provoked to anger by what he had heard, ordered that Abou Saber should be brought before him, and, having upbraided him with inconsistency in recommending patience to another person, when he himself could not practise it, he ordered him to be punished with fifty stripes, and thrown into prison. This sentence was immediately put into execution, and Abou Saber, supporting his head on the knees of patience, implored the protection of the Almighty, with perfect submission to his divine dispensations. After some time had elapsed, it happened that the king was affected one night by a violent *cholic*, of which he died in excessive agony; and as he did not leave any heir to the crown, the people of the city assembled in order to elect a king.

"It was resolved that they should go to the prison, and propose three questions to the criminals confined there; and that whoever

gave the best answer, should be chosen king. In consequence of this resolution, they proceeded to the prison, and asked the three questions; to which none of the prisoners replied, except Abou Saber, whose answers were so ingenious, that he was borne triumphantly away, washed in a warm bath, clothed in royal garments, and placed upon the throne; after which all the inhabitants came and paid him homage: and he governed with such mildness and wisdom, that the people night and day offeredup their prayers for him; and the fame of his justice and liberality was spread all over the world.

"One day it happened that two men attended at his tribunal and demanded an audience. Abou Saber caused them to be brought before him: one of those men was a merchant, and the other the robber who had carried off the sons of Abou Saber. The robber he immediately recognised, but was silent. The merchant then addressed him and said, 'Long be the king's life! This man sold to me two boys; and after some time, these boys began to say, 'we are freemen, we are the sons of a mussulman; and that man carried us away by force, and sold us, at which time, from fear of him, we were afraid to say that we were freemen.' Now, added the merchant, 'let the king order this man to return me the money, and take back the boys.' Abou Saber then asked the robber what he had to say. The man answered, that it was the merchant's fault who had not taken good care of the boys; but that for his own part he had always treated them well, which induced them to make this complaint, in order that he might take them back.

" Abou Saber then sent for the two boys, who proved to be his own sons. He knew them, but they had not any recollection of him: he desired them to explain this matter; and they declared the robber had carried them away from their father and mother to his own dwelling, and had desired them not to say, on any account, that they were freemen; but that when sold as slaves, they could not any longer suppress their complaints. Abou Saber, much affected by their story, ordered them to tell their names, and then sent them to his own apartments; after which he caused the robber to be imprisoned, and the merchant's money to be deposited in the public treasury.

" On another day it happened that two persons in like manner solicited an audience of the king. When they were admitted, one proved to be the wife of Abou Saber, and the other the man who had taken her away by force; but Abou Saber did not know his wife, because she wore her veil. The robber having paid his respects, informed the king that this woman, who had lived with him for some time, would not consent to perform the duties of a wife. Abou Saber addressed the woman, and asked her why she refused to obey her husband? She immediately answered, and declared that this man was not her husband; that she was the wife of a person named Abou Saber; and that this man had taken her to his house against her inclination.

" Abou Saber ordered his servants to take the woman to his haram; and having made a proclamation, and assembled all the inha-

bitants of the city, and caused the robber who had taken away his sons, and the man who had carried off his wife, to be brought before them, and having explained the nature of their offences, and related the circumstances of his own story, he gave orders for their execution.

"After this he passed the remainder of his life in peaceful enjoyment of the supreme power, which at his death devolved upon his son, and continued for many generations in the family, as the reward of his patience."

Here Bakhtyar concluded his story, and by desire of the king was sent back to prison.

CHAPTER V.

Story of the King of Yemen and his Slave Abrahah.

WHEN the next morning arrived, the fifth vizier waited upon the king, and represented the danger that might attend any further delay in the execution of Bakhtyar, as the indulgence which had been shewn to him would be an encouragement to others, and induce them to commit offences, by giving them hopes of impunity. In consequence of this, the king ordered every thing to be prepared for the execution of the young man, who, being brought before him, intreated his majesty for a longer respite, and assured him, that he would, on a future day, be as rejoiced at having spared his life, as a certain king of Yemen was at having pardoned the offence of his slave. The king desired Bakhtyar to relate the particular circumstances of this story; and he accordingly began it in the following manner:

" In former times the kingdonm of Yemen was governed by a very powerful but tyrannical prince, who, for the slightest offences, inflicted the most severe punishments. He had, how-

ever, a certain slave, named Abrahah, of whom he was very fond. This young man was son of the king of Zanguebar, who by chance had fallen into slavery, and never disclosed the secret of his birth.

" Abrahah used frequently to attend the king of Yemen on his hunting parties. During one of these excursions, it happened that a deer bounded before the king's horse: he discharged some arrows at it without effect; when Abrahah, who was close behind him, spurred on his horse, and aimed a bord-bladed arrow at the deer: but it so happened that the arrow passed by the side of the king's head, and cut off one of his ears. The king, in the first impulse of anger, ordered his attendants to seize Abrahah; but afterwards declared that he pardoned his offence. They then returned to the city; and, after some time had elapsed, having gone on board a vessel and sailed into the ocean, a tempest arose, and the ship was wrecked, and the king saved himself by clinging to a plank, and was driven on the coast of Zanguebar. Having returned thanks to Providence for his preservation, he proceeded till he reached the chief city of that country. As it was night, the doors of the houses and all the shops were shut; and, not knowing where he might find a better place of repose, he sheltered himself under the shade of a merchant's house. It happened that some thieves, in the course of the night, broke open the house, and, having murdered the merchant and his servants, plundered it of every thing that was valuable. The king of Yemen, overcome by fatigue, had slept the whole time, unconscious of this

transaction ; but some of the blood had by accident fallen on his clothes.

"When morning came, every body was employed in endeavouring to discover the murderers of the merchant ; and the stranger being found so near the house, with blood upon his clothes, was immediately seized, and dragged before the tribunal of the king. The king of Zanguebar asked him why he had chosen his capital as the scene of such an infamous murder ; and desired him to acknowledge who were his accomplices, and how he had diposed of the merchant's property. The king of Yemen declared that he was innocent, and perfectly ignorant of the whole transaction : that he was of a princely family ; and, having been shipwrecked, was driven on that coast, and had by accident reposed himself under the shade of that house when the murder was committed. The king of Zanguebar then inquired of him by what means his clothes had become stained with blood, and, finding that the stranger could not account for that circumstance, he ordered the officers of justice to load him away to execution. The unfortunate king of Yemen entreated for mercy, and asserted, that his innocence would on some future day become apparent.

"The king consented to defer his execution for a while ; and he was sent to prison.

"On one side of the prison there was an extensive plain, with a running stream, to which, every day, the prisoners were

brought, that they might wash themselves ; and it was the custom that once every week the king resorted to that plain, where he gave public audience to persons of all ranks. On one of those days the king of Zanguebar was on the plain, surrounded by his troops, and the prisoners were sitting by the side of the stream along which ran a wall of the prison. It happened that Abrahah, who had been the king of Yemen's slave, was standing near this wall, but his former master did not recognize him, as they had been separated for some time, Abrahah having found means to return to Zanguebar his native country.

" At this moment a crow chanced to light upon the wall, which the king of Yemen perceived, and taking up a large flat bone, he threw it with his utmost strength, and exclaimed, ' if I succeed in hitting that crow, I shall obtain my liberty :' but he missed his aim ; the bone passed by the crow, and striking the cheek of Abrahah, cut off one of his ears. Abrahah immediately caused an inquiry to be made, and the person who had thrown the bone to be brought before the king, who called him a base-born dog, and ordered the executioner to cut off his head. The king of Yemen sued for mercy, and requested, that at most he might be punished according to the laws of retaliation, which would not a-ward a head for an ear. The king gave orders that one of his ears should be cut off ; and the executioner was preparing to fulfil this sentence, when he perceived that the prisoner had already lost an ear.

"This circumstance occasioned much surprise, and excited the king's curiosity; he told the prisoner that he would pardon him, on condition of his relating the true story of his adventures.

"The king of Yemen immediately disclosed his real name and rank, described the accident by which he lost his ear, the shipwreck which he suffered, and the circumstances which occasioned his imprisonment.

"At the conclusion of his narrative, Abrahah having recognized his former master fell at his feet, embraced him and wept. They mutually forgave each other; and the king of Yemen being taken to a warm bath, was clothed in royal garments, mounted on a noble charger, and conducted to the palace. After which he was furnished with a variety of splendid robes and suits of armour, horses, slaves and damsels. During two months he was feasted and entertained with the utmost hospitality and magnificence, attended constantly by Abrahah. In the course of this time, the robbers who had murdered the merchant, were discovered and punished; and after that the king of Yemen returned to his own country."

Bakhtyar having thus demonstrated that appearances might be very strong against an innocent person, the king resolved to defer execution for another day, and he was accordingly led back to prison.

CHAPTER VI.

The Story of King Dadein and his two Viziers.

ON the following day, the sixth vizier having paid his respects to the king, represented the danger of letting an enemy live when in one's power, and, by many artful speeches, induced his majesty to order the execution of Bakhtyar, who was immediately brought from the prison. When he came before the king, he persisted in declaring his innocence, and advised him not to be precipitate, like king Dadein, in putting to death a person on the malicious accusation of an enemy.

The king, desirous of hearing the story to which Bakhtyar alluded, ordered him to relate it ; and he began as follows :

" There was a certain king named Dadein, who had two viziers, Kardar and Kamgar ; and the daughter of Kamgar was the most lovely creature of the age. It happened that the king, proceeding on a hunting excursion, took along with him the father of this beautiful damsel, and left the charge of government in the hands of Kardar.

" One day, during the warm season, Kardar passing near the palace of Kamgar, beheld this fair damsel walking in the garden, and became enamoured of her beauty; but having reason to believe that her father would not consent to bestow her on him, he resolved to devise some stratagem whereby he might obtain the object of his desires.—' At the king's return from the chace,' said he, ' I'll represent the charms of this damsel in such glowing colours, that he will not fail to demand her in marriage, and I'll then contrive to excite his anger against her, in consequence of which he shall deliver her to me for punishment; and thus, my designs shall be accomplished.'

" One day after the king's return from the hunting party, he desired Kardar to inform him on the principal events which had occurred during his absence. Kardar replied that his majesty's subjects had been all solicitous for his prosperity; but that he had himself seen one of the most astonishing objects of the universe. The king's curiosity being thus excited, he ordered Kardar to describe what he had seen: and Kardar dwelt with such praises on the fascinating charms of Kamgar's daughter, that the king became enamoured of her, and said, ' But how is this damsel to be obtained?'—Kardar replied, ' There is not any difficulty in this business; it is not necessary to employ either money or messengers: your majesty needs only to acquaint her father with your wishes.'

" The king approved of this counsel, and having sent for Kamgar, mentioned the affair to him accordingly. Kamgar, with due submission, declared, ' that if he possessed an hundred daughters,

they should all be at his majesty's command;' but begged permission to retire and inform the damsel of the honour designed for her. Having obtained leave, he hastened to his daughter, and related to her all that passed between the king and him. The damsel expressed her dislike to the proposed connection; but the father dreading the king's anger in case of a refusal, knew not how to act. 'Contrive some delay,' said she; 'solicit leave of absence for a few days, and let us fly from this country.' Kamgar approved of this advice; and having waited on the king, obtained leave to absent himself from court for ten days, under pretence of making the preparations necessary for a female on the eve of matrimony; and when night came on, he fled from the city with his daughter.

"Next day the king was informed of their flight; in consequence of which he sent off two hundred servants to seek them in various directions; and the officious Kardar set out also in pursuit of them. After ten days, they were surprised by the side of a well, taken and bound, and brought before the king, who, in his anger, dashed out the brains of Kamgar: then looking on the daughter of the unfortunate man, her beauty so much affected him, that he sent her to his palace, appointed servants to attend her, besides a cook, who, at his own request, was added to her establishment. After some time, Kardar became impatient, and enraged at the failure of his project; but he resolved to try the success of another scheme. It happened that the encroachments of a powerful enemy rendered the king's presence necessary among the troops; and on setting out to join the army, he committed the management of affairs, and the government of the city, to Kardar, whose mind was wholly filled with stratagems for getting the daughter of Kamgar into

his power.

"One day he was passing near the palace, and discovered her sitting alone on the balcony; to attract her attention he threw up a piece of brick or tile, and on her looking down to see from whence it came, she beheld Kardar. He addressed her with the usual salutation, which she returned. He then began to declare his admiration of her beauty, and the violence of his love, which deprived him of repose both day and night; and concluded by urging her to elope with him, saying that he would take as much money as they could possibly want; or, if she would consent, that he was ready to destroy the king by poison, and seize upon the throne himself.

"The daughter of Kamgar replied to this proposal, by upbraiding Kardar with his baseness and perfidy. When he asked her how she could ever fix her affections on the man who had killed her father, she answered, that such had been the will of God, and that she was resolved to submit accordingly. Having spoken thus, she retired; and Kardar, fearing lest she should relate to the king what had passed between them, hastened to meet him as he returned in triumph after conquering his enemies; and whilst walking along by the side of the king's horse, began to inform his majesty of all that happened in his absence. Having mentioned several occurrences, he added, that one circumstance was of such a nature that he could not prevail on himself to relate it. It was such as the king would be very much displeased at hearing. The king's curiosity being thus excited, he ordered Kardar to relate this occurrence; and he, declaring that it was a most ungrateful task,

informed him, that it was a maxim of the wise men, 'when you have killed a serpent, you should also kill its young.' He then proceeded to relate, that one day during the warm season, being seated near the door of the haram, he overheard some voices, and that his suspicions being excited, he concealed himself behind the hangings, and listened attentively, when he heard the daughter of Kamgar express her affection for the cook, who, in return, declared his attachment; and that they spoke of poisoning the king in revenge for his having killed her father. 'I had not patience,' added Kardar, 'to listen any longer.'

"At this intelligence the king changed colour with rage and indignation, and, on arriving at the palace, ordered the unfortunate cook to be instantly cut in two. He then sent for the daughter of Kamgar, and upbraided her with the intention of destroying him by poison. She immediately perceived that this accusation proceeded from the malevolence of Kardar, and was going to speak in vindication of herself, when the king ordered her to be put to death; but being dissuaded by an attendant from killing a woman, he revoked the sentence of death, and she was tied hands and feet, and placed upon a camel, which was turned into a dreary wilderness, where there was neither water, nor shade, nor any trace of cultivation.

"Here she suffered, from the intense heat and thirst, to such a degree that, expecting every moment to be her last, she resigned herself to the will of Providence, conscious of her own innocence. Just then the camel lay down, and on that spot where they were a fountain of delicious water sprung forth; the cords which bound

her hands and feet dropped off; she refreshed herself by a hearty draught of the water, and fervently returned thanks to Heaven for this blessing, and her wonderful preservation. On this the most verdant and fragrant herbage appeared round the borders of the fountain; it became a blooming and delightful spot, and the camel placed himself so as to afford his lovely companion a shade and shelter from the sunbeams.

" It happened that one of the king's camel-keepers was at this time in pursuit of some camels which had wandered into the desert, and without which he dared not return to the city. He had sought them for several days amidst hills and forests without any success. At length, on coming to this spot, he beheld the daughter of Kamgar and the camel, which at first he thought was one of those he sought, and the clear fountain, with the verdant banks, where neither grass nor water had ever been seen before. Astonished at this discovery, he resolved not to interrupt the lady, who was engaged in prayer; but when she had finished, he addressed her, and was so charmed by her gentleness and piety, that he offered to adopt her as his child; and expressed his belief, that, through the efficacy of her prayers, he should recover the strayed camels.

" This good man's offer she thankfully accepted; and having partaken of a fowl and some bread which he had with him, at his request she prayed for the recovery of his camels. As soon as she had concluded her prayer, the camels appeared on the skirts of the wilderness, and of their own accord approached the camel-keeper.

" He then represented to the daughter of Kamgar, the danger of remaining all night in the wilderness, which was the haunt of many wild beasts ; and proposed that she should return with him to the city, and dwell with him in his house, where he would provide for her a retired apartment, in which she might perform her devotions without interruption. To this proposal she agreed, and being mounted on the camel, she returned to the city, and arrived at the house of her companion at the time of evening prayer. Here she resided for some time, employing herself in exercises of piety and devotion.

" One day the camel-keeper being desired by the king to relate his past adventures, mentioned, among other circumstances, the losing of his camels, the finding them through the efficacy of a young female's prayer, the discovery of a fountain where none had been before, and his adopting the female as his daughter ; he concluded by telling the king that she was now at his house, and employed day and night in acts of devotion.

" The king, on hearing this, expressed an earnest wish that he might be allowed to see this young woman, and prevail on her to intercede with Providence in his behalf. The camel-keeper, having consented, returned to his house accompanied by the king, who waited at the door of the apartment where the daughter of Kamgar was engaged in prayer. When she had concluded, he approached, and with astonishment recognized. Having tenderly embraced her, he wept, and entreated her forgivenness. This she readily granted ; but begged that he would conceal himself in the apartment whilst she should converse with Kardar, whom she sent for.

When he arrived, and beheld her with a thousand expressions of fondness, he inquired the means whereby she had escaped; and he told her, that on the day when the king had banished her into the wilderness, he had sent people to seek her, and to bring her to him. 'How much better would it have been,' added he, 'had you followed my advice, and agreed to my proposal of poisoning the king who, I said, would endeavour to destroy you, as he had killed your father! but you rejected my advice, and declared yourself ready to submit to whatsoever Providence should decree. Hereafter,' continued he, 'you will pay more attention to my words: but now let us not think of what is past; I am your slave, and you are dearer to me than my own eyes.' So saying, he attempted to clasp the daughter of Kamgar in his arms, when the king, who was concealed behind the hangings, rushed furiously on him, and put him to death. After this he conducted the damsel to his palace, and constantly lamented his precipitancy in having killed her father."

Here Bakhtyar concluded the story; and having requested a farther respite, that he might have an opportunity of proving his innocence, was sent back to prison by order of the king.

CHAPTER VII.

Story of the King of Abyssinia, shewing the artifice of Womaen.

THE seventh vizier, on the following day, approached the king, and having told him that his lenity towards Bakhtyar was made the subject of public conversation, added many arguments to procure an order for the execution of that unfortunate young man. The king, changing colour with anger, sent immediately for the queen, and asked her advice concerning Bakhtyar. She declared that he deserved death; in consequence of which, the king ordered his attendants to bring him from the prison. When he came into the royal presence, he begged for mercy, saying, 'My innocence will appear hereafter; and though your majesty can easily pnt to death a living man, you cannot restore a dead man to life.' 'How,' said the king, 'can you deny your guilt, since the women of the haram all bear witness against you?' Bakhtyar replied, 'Women, for their own purposes, often devise falsehoods, and are very expert in artifice and fraud, as appears from the story of the king of Irak's daughter, and her adventures with the king of Abyssinia, which, if your majesty permit, I shall briefly relate.

Having obtained permission, he began the story as follows: "It is related that Abyssinia was once governed by a certain monarch, whose armies were very numerous, and his treasures well filled; but not having any enemy to engage him in war, he neglected his troops, and withheld their pay, so that they were reduced to great distress, and began to murmur, and at last made their complaints to the vizier. He, pitying their situation, promised that he would take measures for their relief, and desired them to be patient for a little while. He then considered within himself what steps he should take; and at length, knowing the king's inclination to women, and understanding that the princess of Irak was uncommonly beautiful, he resolved to praise her charms in such extravagant language before the king, as to induce him to demand her from her father, who, from his excessive fondness, would not probably consent to bestow her on him, and thus a war would ensue, in which case the troops should be employed, and their arrears paid off.

" Pleased with the ingenuity of this stratagem, the vizier hastened to the king, and after conversing, for some time, on various subjects, contrived to mention the king of Irak, and immediately described the beauty of his daughter in such glowing colours, that the king became enamoured, and consulted the vizier on the means whereby he might hope to obtain possession of that lovely princess. The vizier replied, that the first step was to send ambassadors to the king of Irak, soliciting his daughter in marriage. In consequence of this advice, some able and discreet persons were dispatched as ambassadors to Irak. On their arrival in that country, the king received them courteously; but when they disclosed the object of their mission, he became angry, and declared that he

would not comply with their demand.

"The ambassadors returned to Abyssinia, and having reported to the king the unsuccessful result of their negotiation, he vowed that he would send an army into Irak, and lay that country waste, unless his demands were complied with.

"In consequence of this resolution, he ordered the doors of his treasuries to be thrown open, and caused so much money to be distributed among the soldiers, that they were satisfied. From all quarters the troops assembled, and zealously prepared for war. On the other hand the king of Irak levied his forces, and sent them to oppose the Abyssinians, who invaded his dominions; but he did not lead them to the field himself, and they were defeated and put to flight. When the account of this disaster reached the king of Irak, he consulted his vizier, and asked what was next to be done. The vizier candidly declared that he did not think it necessary to prolong the war on account of a female, and advised his majesty to send ambassadors with overtures of peace, and an offer of giving the princess to the king of Abyssinia. This advice, although reluctantly, the king of Irak followed: ambassadors were dispatched to the enemy with offers of peace, and a declaration of the king's consent to the marriage of his daughter.

"These terms being accepted, the princess was sent with confidential attendants to the king of Abyssinia, who retired with her to his own dominions, where he espoused her; and some time passed away in festivity and pleasure. But it happened that the king of Irak had, some years before, given his daughter in marriage to a-

nother man, by whom she had a son ; and this boy was now grown up, and accomplished in all sciences, and such a favourite with the king of Irak, that he would never permit him to be one hour absent from him. The princess, when obliged to leave him, felt all the anxiety of a mother, and resolved to devise some stratagem whereby she might enjoy his society in Abyssinia.

"One day the king of Abyssinia, on some occasion, behaved harshly to the queen, and spoke disrespectfully of her father. She in return said, 'your dominions, it is true, are most fertile and abundant ; but my father posseses such a treasure as no other monarch can boast of ; a youth, sent to him by the kindness of Heaven, skilled in every profound science, and accomplished in every manly exercise ; so that he rather seems to be one of the inhabitants of paradise than of this earth.' These praises so excited the curiosity of the king, that he vowed he would bring this boy to his court, were he even obliged to go himself for him. The queen replied, 'my father would be like a distracted person were he deprived even for an hour of this boy's society ; but some intelligent person must be sent to Irak in the character of a merchant, and endeavour by every means to steal him away.' The king approved of this advîce and chose a person well skilled in business, who had experienced many reverses of fortune, and seen much of the world. To this man he promised a reward of an hundred male slaves, and an hundred beautiful damsels, if he should succeed in bringing away this boy from the king of Irak's court. The man inquired the name of the boy, which was Firokhzad, and, disguised as a merchant, set out immediately for Irak. Having arrived there, he presented various offerings to the

king; and one day found an opportunity of conversing with the boy. At last he said, 'With such accomplishments as you possess, were you in Abyssinia for one day, you would be rendered master of slaves and damsels, and riches of every kind.' He then described the delights of that country, which made such an impression on Firokhzad, that he became disgusted with Irak, and attached himself to the merchant, and said, 'I have often heard of Abyssinia, and have long wished to enjoy the pleasures which it yields. The king's daughter is now in that country, and if I could contrive to go there, my happiness would be complete: but I know not how to escape from this place, as the king will not permit me to be one hour absent from him. The merchant gladly undertook to devise some means for the escape of Firokzad; and at last having put him into a chest, and placed him upon a camel, he contrived one evening to carry him off unnoticed. The next day the king of Irak sent messengers in all directions to seek him. They inquired of all the caravans and travellers, but could not obtain any intelligence concerning him. At last the merchant brought him to Abyssinia, and the king, finding that his accomplishments and talents had not been over-rated was much delighted with his society; and as he had not any child, he bestowed on him a royal robe and crown, a horse, and sword and shield, and adopted him as his son, and brought him into the haram. When the queen beheld Firokhzad, she wept for joy, embraced him, and kissed him with all the fondness of a mother. It happened that one of the servants was a witness, unperceived, of this interview. He immediately hastened to the king, and represented the transaction in such a manner as to excite all his jealousyand rage. However he resolved to

inquire into the matter; but Firokhzad did not acknowledge that the queen was his mother; and when he sent for her, she answered his questions only by her tears. From these circumstances, he concluded that they were guilty; and accordingly he ordered one of his attendants to take away the young man to a burying-ground without the city, and there to cut off his head. The attendants led Firokhzad away, and was preparing to put the king's sentence into execution; but when he looked in the youth's face, his heart was moved with compassion, and he said, 'it must have been the woman's fault, and not his crime;' and he resolved to save him.

"When he told Firokhzad that he would conceal him in his own house, the boy was delighted, and promised, that if ever it was in his power he would reward him for his kindness. Having taken him to his house, the man waited on the king, and told him, that he had, in obedience to his orders, put Firokhzad to death. After this the king treated his wife with the utmost coldness; and she sat melancholy, lamenting the absence of her son. It happened that an old woman beheld the queen as she sat alone, weeping, in her chamber. Pitying her situation, she approached, and humbly inquired the occasion of her grief. The queen made no reply; but when the old woman promised not only to observe the utmost secrecy, if entrusted with the story of her misfortunes, but to find a remedy for them, she related at length all that had happened, and disclosed the mystery of Firokhzad's birth.

"The old woman desired the queen to comfort herself, and

said, ‘ This night, before the king retires to bed, you must lay herself down, and close your eyes as if asleep ; he will then place something, which I shall give him, on your bosom, and will command you, by the power of the writing contained in that, to reveal the truth. You must then begin to speak, and without any apprehension, repeat all that you have now told me.’

“ The old woman having then found that the king was alone in his summer-house, presented herself before him, and said, O king ! this solitary life occasions melancholy and sadness. The king replied, that it was solitude which rendered him melancholy, but vexation, on account of the queen's infidelity, and the ingratitude of Firokhzad, on whom he had heaped so many favours, and whom he had adopted as his own son. ‘ Yet,’ added he, ‘ I am not convinced of his guilt ; and since the day that I caused him to be killed, I have not enjoyed repose, nor am I certain whether the fault was his or the queen's. The old woman replied, ‘ Let not the king be longer in suspense on this subject. I have a certain talisman, one of the talismans of Solomon, written in Grecian characters, and in the Syrian language ; if your majesty will watch an opportunity when the queen shall be asleep, and lay it on her breast, and say, O thou that sleepest ! by virtue of the talisman, and of the name of God which it contains, I conjure thee to speak to me, and to reveal all the secrets of thy heart.’ ‘ On this,’ said the old woman, ‘ she will immediately begin to speak, and will declare every thing that she knows, both true and false.’

“ The king, delighted at the hopes of discovering the truth

by means of this talisman, desired the old woman to fetch it. She accordingly went home, and taking a piece of paper, scrawled on it some unmeaning characters, folded it up, and tied it with a cord, and sealed it with wax; then hastened to the king, and desired him to preserve it carefully till night should afford an opportunity of trying its efficacy. When it was night, the king watched until he found that the queen was in bed; then gently approaching, and believing her to be asleep, he laid the talisman on her breast, and repeated the words which the old woman had taught him. The queen, who had also received her lesson, still affecting the appearance of one asleep, immediately began to speak, and related all the circumstances of her story.

"On hearing this, the king was much affected, and tenderly embraced the queen, who stated from her bed as if perfectly unconscious of having revealed the secrets of her breast. He then blamed her for not having candidly acknowledged the circumstance of Firokhzad's birth, who, he said, should have been considered as his own son.

"All that night they passed in mutual condolence, and the next morning the king sent for the person to whom he had delivered Firokhzad, and desired him to point out the spot where his body lay, that he might perform the last duty to that unfortunate youth, and ask forgivenness from his departed spirit. The man replied, 'It appears that your majesty is ignorant of Eirokhzad's situation: he is at present in a place of safety; for although you ordered me to kill him, I ventured to disobey, and have concealed him in my house, from whence, if you permit, I shall immediately

bring him.' At this information the king was so delighted, that he rewarded the man with a splendid robe, and sent with him several attendants to bring Firokhzad to the palace.

"On arriving in his presence, Firokhzad threw himself at the king's feet; but he raised him in his arms, and asked his forgiveness, and thus the affair ended in rejoicing and festivity."—'Now,' said Bakhtyar, having concluded his story, 'it appears that women are expert in stratagems; and if Firokhzad had been put to death, according to the king's command, what grief and sorrow would have been the consequence! To avoid such, added Bakhtyar, let not your majesty be precipitate in ordering my execution.'

The king resolved to wait another day, and Bakhtyar was sent back to prison.

CHAPTER VIII.

Story of the Jewel Merchant.

On the next morning, the eighth vizier having paid his compliments to the king, addressed him on the subject of Bakhtyar, and said, Government resembles a tree, the root of which is legal punishment. Now, if the root of a tree become dry, the leaves will wither; why then should the punishment of Bakhtyar be any longer deferred?

In consequence of this discourse, the king ordered the executioner to prepare himself, and Bakhtyar was brought from prison. When the unfortunate young man came before the king, he addressed him, and said, 'If your majesty will consider the consequences of haste and precipitancy, it will appear that they are invariably sorrow and repentance; as we find confirmed in the story of the jewel merchant.' The king expressed his desire of hearing the story to which he alluded; and Bakhtyar began it accordingly, in the following manner:

"There was a certain jewel-merchant, a very wealthy man, and eminently skilled in the knowledge of precious stones: his wife, a very prudent and amiable woman, was in a state of pregnancy, when it happened that the king sent a messenger to her husband,

desiring his attendance at court, that he might consult him in the choice of jewels. The husband received the king's messenger with all due respect, and immediately prepared to set out on his journey to the capital. When taking leave of his wife, he desired her to remember him in her prayers; and, in case she should bring forth a boy, to call his name Behrooz.

"After this injunction, he departed from his house, and at length arrived in the capital, where he waited on the king, and having paid his respects, was employed in selecting from a boxful of pearls, those that were most valuable. The king was so much pleased with his skill and ingenuity, that he kept him constantly near his own person, and entrusted to him the making of various royal ornaments, crowns and girdles, studded with jewels. At length the wife of this jewel-merchant was delivered of two boys; one of whom, in compliance with her husband's desire, she called Behrooz, the other Roozbeh; and she sent intelligence of this event to the father, who solicited permission from the king that he might return home for a while and visit his family; but the king would not grant him this indulgence. The next year he made the same request, and with the same success. Thus, during eight years, he as often solicited leave to visit his wife and sons, but could not obtain it. In the course of this time, the boys had learned to read the Koran, and were instructed in the art of penmanship and other accomplishments; and they wrote a letter to their father, expressing their sorrow and anxiety on account of his absence. The jewel-merchant, no longer able to resist his desire of seeing his family, represented his situation to the king in such strong colours that he desired him to send for his wife and children, and allowed him an

ample sum of money to defray the expences of their journey.

"A trusty messenger was immediately dispatched to the jewel-merchant's wife, who, on receipt of her husband's letter, set out with her two sons on their way to the capital. One evening, after a journey of a month, they arrived at the sea-side. Here they resolved to wait until morning; and being refreshed with a slight repast, the boys amused themselves in wandering along the shore.

"It happened that the jewel-merchant, in expectation of meeting his wife and children, had come thus far on the way; and having left his clothes and money concealed in different places, he bathed himself in the sea, and on returning to the shore, put on his clothes, but forgot his gold. Having taken some refreshment, he was proceeding on his journey, when he thought of his money, and went back to seek it, but could not find it. At this moment he perceived the two boys, who had wandered thus far, amusing themselves playing along the shore.

"He immediately suspected that these boys had discovered and taken the gold, and accused them accordingly. They declared their ignorance of the matter, which so enraged the jewel-merchant that he seized them both, and cast them headlong into the sea.

"After this he proceeded on his way, whilst the wife was so unhappy at the long absence of her sons, that the world became dark in her eyes, and she raised her voice and called upon the boys. When the jewel-merchant heard the voice of his wife, he hastened

to meet her, and inquired after his two sons, expressing his eager desire of seeing them. The wife told him that they had left her some time before, and had wandered along the sea-side. At this intelligence the jewel-merchant began to lament, and tore his clothes, and exclaimed, ‘ Alas, alas, I have drowned my sons !’ He then related what had happened, and proceeded with his wife along the shore in search of the boys ; but they sought in vain. Then they smote their breasts, and wept ; and when the next morning came, they said, ‘ from this time forth, whatsoever happens must be to us a matter of indifference. ’ And they set out on their journey towards the city with afflicted bosoms and bleeding hearts, being persuaded that their sons had perished in the water. But they were ignorant of the wonderful kindness of Providence, which rescued the two boys from destruction : for it happened that the king of that country, being on a hunting party, passed along the shore on that side where Behrooz had fallen. When he perceived the boy, he ordered his attendants to take him up, and finding him of a pleasing countenance, although pale from the terror of the water, and the danger he had escaped, he inquired into the circumstances which had befallen him. The boy informed him, that with his brother he had been walking on the shore, when a stranger seized upon them, and flung them into the water. The king, not having any child, inquired the name of the boy. When he answered that his name was Behrooz*, he exclaimed, ‘ I accept it as a favourable omen, and adopt you as my own son.’ After this Behrooz, mounted on a horse, accompanied the king to his capital, and all the subjects were enjoined to obey him as heir to the

* See the advertisement.

crown. After some time the king died, and Behrooz reigned in his place with such wisdom, liberality and uprightness, that his fame resounded through all quarters of the world.

"It happened in the mean time that the other boy, whose name was Roozbeh, had been rescued from the water by some robbers, who agreed to sell him as a slave, and divide the price amongst them. The jewel-merchant and his wife had reached the city, and purchased a house, where they resolved to pass the remainder of their lives in prayer and exercises of devotion. Bnt finding it necessary to procure an attendant, the jewel-merchant purchased a young boy at the slave market, whom he did nct know, but whom natural affection prompted him to choose.

"On bringing home his young slave, the wife fainted away, and exclaimed, 'This is your son Roozbeh!' The parents, as well as the child, wept with joy, and returned thanks to Heaven for such an unexpected blessing.

"After this the jewel-merchant instructed Roozbeh in his own profession, so that in a little time he became perfectly skilled in the value of precious stones; and having collected a very considerable number, he expressed a wish of turning them to profit, by selling them to a certain king in a distant country, one who was celebrated for his generosity and kindness to strangers.

"The father consented that he should visit the court of this monarch, on condition that he would not afflict his parents by too long an absence. Roozbeh accordingly set out, and arrived at the capital of that king, who happened to be his own brother,

Behrooz. Him, however, after the lapse of many years, he did not recognize.

" The king, having graciously received the present which Roozbeh offered, purchased of him all the jewels, and conceived such an affection for him that he kept him constantly in the palace, day and night. At this time a foreign enemy invaded the country; but the king thought the matter of so little importance, that he contented himself with sending some troops to the field, and remaind at home, carousing and drinking with Roozbeh. At length, one night, at a very late hour, all the servants being absent, the king became intoxicated, and fell asleep. Roozbeh, not preceiving any of the guards or attendants, resolved that he would watch the king until morning ; and accordingly, taking a sword, he stationed himself near the king's pillow. After some time had elapsed, several of the soldiers who had gone to oppose the enemy returned, and, entering the palace, discovered Roozbeh and the king in this situation. Roozbeh they immediately seized ; and when the king awoke, they told him, that, by their coming, they had saved his majesty from assassination, which the jeweller, with a drawn sword, had been ready to perpetrate. The king, at first, ordered his immediate execution ; and as day was beginning to dawn, and the approach of the enemy required his presence at the head of his troops, he sent for the executioner, who having bound the eyes of Roozbeh, and drawn his sword, exclaimed, ' Say, king of the world, shall I strike or not ?'

" The king, considering that it would be better to inquire more particularly into the affair, and knowing, that, although it is easy

to kill, it is impossible to restore a man to life, resolved to defer the punishment until his return, and sent Roozbeh to prison.

"After this he proceeded to join the army, and having subdued his enemies, returned to the capital; but, during the space of two years, forgot the unfortunate Roozbeh, who lingered away his life in confinement.

"In the mean time his father and mother, grieving on account of his absence, and ignorant of what had befallen him, sent a letter of inquiry by a confidential messenger to the money-changers or bankers of that city. Having read this, they wrote back in answer, that Roozbeh had been in prison for two years.

"On receiving this information, the jewel-merchant and his wife resolved to set out and throw themselves at the feet of this king, and endeavour to obtain from him the pardon and liberty of their son. With heavy hearts they accordingly proceeded on their journey, and having arrived at the capital, presented themselves before the king, and said, 'Be it known unto your exalted majesty, that we are two wretched strangers, oppressed by the infirmities of age, and overwhelmed by misfortune. We were blessed with two sons; one named Behrooz, the other Roozbeh; but it was the will of Heaven that they should fall into the sea, where one of them perished, but the other was restored to us. The fame of your majesty's generosity and greatness, induced our son to visit this imperial court; and we are informed, that, by your orders, he is now in prison. The object of our petition is, that your majesty might take compassion on our helpless situation, and restore to us our long lost son.'

"The king, on hearing this, was astonished, and for a while imagined that it was all a dream. At length, when convinced that the old man and woman were his own parents, and that Roozbeh was his brother, he sent for him to the prison, embraced them and wept, and placed them beside him on the throne; and for the sake of Roozbeh, set at liberty all those who had been confined with him. After this he divided the empire with his brother, and their time passed away in pleasure and tranquillity."

This story being concluded, Bakhtyar observed, that the jewel-merchant, by his precipitancy, had nearly occasioned the death of his two sons; and that Behrooz, by deferring the execution of his brother, had prevented an infinity of distress to himself and his parents. This observation induced the king to grant Bakhtyar another day's reprieve, and he was taken back to prison.

CHAPTER IX.

The Story of Aboutemam.

When the next morning came, the ninth vizier appeared before the king, and said, that his extraordinary forbearance and lenity in respect to Bakhtyar, had given occasion to much scandal ; as every criminal, however heinous his offence, began to think that he might escape punishment by amusing the king with idle stories.

The king, on hearing this, sent for Bakhtyar to the prison, and desired the executioner to attend. When the unfortunate young man came before the king, he requested a respite only of two days, in the course of which he hoped his innocence might be proved; 'although,' said he, 'I know that the malice of one's enemies is a flame from which it is almost impossible to escape : as appears from the story of Aboutemam, who, on the strength of a false accusation, was put to death by the king, and his innocence, acknowledged when too late.'

‘ Who,’ demanded the king, ‘ was that Aboutemam, and what were those malicious accusations which prevailed against him ?’

“ Aboutemam,” said Bakhtyar, “ was a very wealthy man, who resided in a city, the king of which was so tyrannical and unjust, that whatever money any one possessed above five direms, he seized on for his own use. Aboutemam was so disgusted and terrified by the oppressions and cruelties of this king, that he never enjoyed one meal in peace or comfort, until he had collected all his property together, and contrived to escape from that place. After some time he settled in the capital of another king, a city adorned with gardens, and well supplied with running streams. This king was a man of upright and various principles, renowned for hospitality and kindness to strangers. In this capital Aboutemam purchased a magnificent mansion, in which he sumptuously entertained the people of the city, presenting each of them, at his departure, with a handsome dress suited to his rank. The inhabitants were delighted with his generosity, and his hospitality was daily celebrated by the strangers who resorted to his house. He also expended considerable sums in the erection of bridges, caravanseries and mosques. At last the fame of his liberality and munificence reached the king, who sent to him two servants with a very flattering message, and an invitation to court.

“ This Aboutemam thankfully accepted ; and having prepared the necessary presents for the king, he hastened to the palace, where he kissed the ground of obedience, and was graciously received.

“ In a short time he became so great a favourite, that the

king would not permit him to be one day absent, and heaped on him so many favours that he was next in power to his royal master; and his advice was followed in all matters of importance.

"But this king had ten viziers, who conceived a mortal hatred against Aboutemam, and said, one to another, 'He has robbed us of all dignity and power, and we must devise some means whereby we may banish him from this country. The chief vizier proposed, that, as the king was a passionate admirer of beauty, and the princess of Turkestan one of the loveliest creatures of the age, they should so praise her charms before him as to induce him to send Aboutemam to ask her in marriage; and as it was the custom of the king of Turkestan to send all ambassadors who came on that errand, to his daughter, who always caused their heads to be cut off, so the destruction of Aboutemam would be certain.

"This advice all the other vizier approved of, and having proceeded to the palace, they took an opportunity of talking on various subjects, until the king of Turkestan was mentioned, when the chief viziers began to celebrate the charms of the lovely princess.

"When the king heard the extravagant praises of beauty, he became enamoured, and declared his intention of dispatching an ambassador to the court of Turkestan and demanding the princess in marriage. The viziers immediately said, that no person was so properly qualified for such an embassy as Aboutemam.—The king accordingly sent for him, and addressing him as his father

and friend, informed him that he had now occasion for his assistance in the accomplishment of a matter on which his heart was bent. Aboutemam desired to know what his majesty's commands might be, and declared himself ready to obey them. The king having communicated his design, all the necessary preparations were made, and Aboutemam set out on his journey to the court of Turkestan. In the mean time the viziers congratulated one another on the success of their stratagem.—When the king of Turkestan heard of Aboutemam's arrival, he sent proper officers to receive and compliment him, and on the following day gave him a public audience; but when the palace was cleared of the crowd, and Aboutemam had an opportunity of speaking in private, he disclosed the object of his mission, and demanded the princess for his master. The king acknowledged himself highly honoured by the proposal of such an alliance, and said, 'I fear that my daughter is not qualified for so exalted a station as you offer; but if you will visit her in the haram, and converse with her, you may form an opinion of her beauty and accomplishment; and if you approve of her, preparations for the marriage shall be made without delay.

"Aboutemam thanked his majesty for this readiness in complying with his demands; but said, that he could not think of profaning the beauty of her who was destined for his sovereign by gazing on her, or of allowing his ears to hear the forbidden sounds of her voice—that, besides, his king never entertained a doubt on the subject of her charms and qualifications: that the daughter of such a monarch must be worthy of any king; but that he was not sent to make any inquiry as to her merits, but to

demand her in marriage.—The king of Turkestan, on hearing this reply, embraced Aboutemam, and said, ‘ Within this hour I meditated thy destruction ; for of all the ambassadors who have hitherto come to solicit my daughter, I have tried the wisdom and talents, and have judged by them of the kings who employed them, and finding them deficient, I have caused their heads to be cut off.’ On saying this he took from under his robe a key, with which he opened a lock, and going into another part of the palace, he exhibited to Aboutemam the heads of four hundred ambassadors.

“ After this the king directed the necesssary preparations for the departure of his daughter, and invested Aboutemam with a splendid robe of honour ; who, when ten days had elapsed, embarked in a ship with the princess, her damsels, and other attendants. The news of arrival with the fair princess of Turkestan being announced, the king, his master, was delighted ; and the viziers, his mortal enemies, were confounded at the failure of their stratagems. The king accompanied by all the people, great and small, went two stages to meet Aboutemam and the princess, and having led her into the city, after three days, celebrated their marriage by the most sumptuous feasts and rejoicings, and bestowed a thousand thanks on Aboutemam, who every day became a greater favourite. The ten viziers finding, in consequence of this, their own importance and dignity gradually reduced, consulted one with another, saying, ‘ All that we have hitherto done only tends to the exaltation of Aboutemam ; we must devise some other means of disgracing him in the king's esteem, and procuring his banishment from this country.’ After this they con-

certed together, and at length resolved to bribe two boys, whose office was to rub the king's feet every night after he lay down on his bed; and they accordingly instructed these boys to take an opportuniiy, when the king should close his eyes, of saying that Aboutemam had been ungrateful for the favours bestowed on him; that he had violated the haram, and aspired to the queen's affections, and had boasted that she would not have come from Turkestan had she not been enamoured of himself. This lesson the viziers taught the boys, giving them a thousand dinars, and promising five hundred more.

" When it was night the boys were employed as usual, in their office of rubbing the king's feet; and when they perceived his eyes to be closed, they began to repeat all that the viziers had taught them to say concerning Aboutemam.

" The king, hearing this, started up, and dismissing the boys, sent immediately for Aboutemam, and said to him, 'A certain matter has occurred, on the subject of which I must consult you; and I expect that you will relieve my mind by answering the questions that I shall ask.'—Aboutemam declared himself ready to obey.—'What, then,' demanded the king, 'does that servant deserve who, in return for various favours, ungratefully attempts to violate the haram of his sovereign?'

'Such a servant,' answered Aboutemam, 'should be punished with death; his blood should expiate his offence.' When Aboutemam had said this, the king drew his scymitar, and cut off his head, and ordered his body to be cast into a pit. For some days he gave not audience to any person, and the viziers began to exult

in the success of their stratagem; but the king was melancholy, and loved to sit alone, and was constantly thinking of the unfortunate Aboutemam.

"It happened, however, that one day the two boys who had been bribed by the viziers were engaged in a dispute one with the other on the division of the money, each claiming for himself the larger share. In the course of their dispute, they mentioned the innocence of Aboutemam, and the bribe which they had received for defaming him in the king's hearing. All this conversation the king overheard; and trembling with vexation, rage and sorrow, he compelled the boys to relate all the circumstances of the affair; in consequence of which, the ten viziers were immediately seized and put to death, and their houses levelled with the ground; after which the king passed his time in fruitless lamentation for the loss of Aboutemam.

"Thus," said Bakhtyar' "does unrelenting malice persecute unto destruction; but if the king had not been so hasty in killing Aboutemam he would have spared himself all his subsequent sorrow."

The king, affected by this observation, resolved to indulge Bakhtyar with another day, and accordingly sent him back to prison.

CHAPTER X.

Story of the King of Persia.

EARLY on the next morning the tenth vizier sent a woman to the queen, with a message, urging her to exert her influence over the king, and induce him to give orders for the execution of Bakhtyar. The queen, in consequence of this, addressed the king on the subject before he left the palace, and he replied, that Bakhtyar's fate was now decided, and that his execution should not be any longer deferred. The king then went forth, and the viziers attended in their proper places. The tenth vizier was rising to speak, when the king informed him of his resolution to terminate the affair of Bakhtyar, by putting him to death on that day. He was brought accordingly from the prison; and the king, on seeing him, said, 'You have spoken a great deal of your innocence, yet have not been able to make it appear; therefore no longer entertain any hopes of mercy, for I have given orders for your execution.' On hearing this Bakhtyar began to weep, and said, 'I have hitherto endeavoured to gain time, conscious of my innocence, and

hoping that it might be proved, and a guiltless person saved from an ignominious death; but I now find it vain to struggle against the decrees of Heaven. Thus the king of Persia foolishly attempted to counteract his destiny, and triumph over the will of Providence; but in vain.' The king expressed a desire of hearing the story to which Bakhtyar alluded, and the young man began to relate it as follows:

"There was a certain king of Persia, a very powerful and wealthy monarch, who, not having any child, employed all the influence of prayers and of alms to procure the blessing of a son from Heaven. At length one of his hand-maids became pregnant, and the king was transported with joy; but one night, in a dream, he was addressed by an old man, who said, 'The Lord has complied with your request, and to-morrow you shall have a son; but in his seventh year a lion shall seize and carry off this son to the top of a mountain, from which he shall fall, rolling in blood and clay.' When the king awoke, he assembled the viziers, and related to them the horrors of his dream. They replied, 'Long be the king's life! If Heaven has decreed such a calamity, who can oppose or controul it?' The king presumptuously declared that he would struggle against and counteract it; but one of his viziers, eminently skilled in astrology, discovered one day, by the power of his science, that the king would, after twenty years, perish by the hand of his own son. In consequence of this he immediately waited on the king, and informed him that he had to communicate a certain matter, for the truth and certainty of which he would answer with his life. The king desired him to reveal it; and he, falling on the knees of obedience, related all that he had

discovered in the stars. 'If it happens not according to what you predict,' said the king, 'I shall certainly put you to death.' In the mean time, however, he caused a subterraneous dwelling to be constructed, to which he sent the boy, with a nurse. There they remained during the space of seven years, when, in compliance with the heavenly decree, a lion suddenly rushed into the cave, and devoured the nurse, and having wounded the child, carried him up to the summit of a neighbouring mountain, from which he let him fall to the bottom, covered with blood and earth. It happened that one of the king's secretaries came by, in pursuit of game, and perceived the boy in this situation, and the lion standing on the summit of the mountain. He immediately resolved to save the child; and having taken him to his own house, he healed his wounds, and instructed him in various accomplishments.

"On the day after the nurse had been devoured, and the child carried away, by the lion, the king resolved to visit the cave, and finding it deserted, he concluded that the nurse had escaped to some other place. He instantly dispatched messengers to seek her in every quarter, but in vain.

"In process of time, the boy grew up, and acted as keeper of *pen and ink* to the secretary. In this situation, having been employed at the palace, it happened that the king saw and was much pleased with him, and felt within his bosom the force of paternal affection. In consequence of this he demanded him of the secretary, and clothed him in splendid garments; and after some time, when an enemy invaded the country, and required the king's presence with his army, he appointed the young man to be his armour-

bearer; and, accompanied by him, proceeded to battle. After a bloody conflict, the troops of the enemy were victorious, and those of the king began to fly; but he, in the impulse of rage and fury, threw himself into the midst of his adversaries, fighting with the most desperate valour. In this state of confusion it was impossible to know one person from another; the young armour-bearer, who fought also with the utmost bravery, no longer distinguishing the king, rushed into a crowd of combatants, and, striking furiously on all sides, cut off the hand of one man whom he supposed to be of the enemy's side; but this person was the king, who, on recognising the armour-bearer, upbraided him with this attempt upon his life, and being unable to remain any longer in the field, he retired, with his troops, to the capital, and the next day concluded a peace with the enemy, on condition of paying a considerable sum of money. He then gave orders that the armour-bearer should be arrested, and although he persevered in declarations of innocence, they availed him not; he was thrown into prison, and loaded with chains.

"The king, in the mean time, was reposing on the pillow of death; and when he found that all hopes of recovery were vain, he resolved to punish the vizier, who had told him that his son should be torn by a lion, and that he should fall by the hand of that son. 'Now,' said the king, 'my son has been carried away to some other country by his nurse, and I have been wounded by the hand of a different person.' Having said this, he sent for the vizier, and desired him to prepare for death. 'This armour-bearer,' added he, 'and not my own son, has wounded me, contrary to your prediction; and, as you consented to be punished in case your pre-

diction should not be accomplished, I have resolved to put you to death.' 'Be it so,' replied the vizier; 'but let us first inquire into the birth of this young armour-bearer.' The king immediately sent for the young man, and asked him concerning his parents and his country. He answered, that of the country which gave him birth he was ignorant; but that he had been with his mother in a subterraneous place, and that she had informed him of his father's being a king, but that he had never seen his father; that one day a lion carried him away to the summit of a mountain, from which he fell, and was taken up by the secretary, by whom he was instructed in various accomplishments, and from whose service he passed into that of the king.

"When the king heard this, he was amazed, and his hair stood on end, and he sent for the viziers and secretary, who confirmed what the young man had said.

"Having thus ascertained that the armour-bearer was his own son, he resigned to him the crown and throne; and having invested the vizier with the robe of prime minister, he expired in the course of three days."

CONCLUSION.

Here Bakhtyar concluded his narrative; and observed, that he had struggled against his evil destiny, like that king, but in vain. Having said this, the king wished to send him back to prison; but the viziers unanimously declared that they would leave the country if Bakhtyar's punishment was any longer deferred. The king then acknowledged that he could not bear to behold the execution of the young man: in consequence of which the viziers led him away, and assembled all the people by proclamation, that they might see him put to death.

It happened at this time that Ferokh Suvar, who had found Bakhtyar at the side of the well, came, with some of his companions, to the city, and was wrapped in that embroidered cloak which the king and queen had left with the infant. On passing by the place of execution he beheld the guards leading out Bakhtyar to punishment; on seeing this, he rushed amongst them with his companions, and rescued the young man from their hands, and solicited an audience of the king. On coming into the royal presence, Ferokh Suvar exclaimed, "This young man is my son; I cannot bear to see him executed: if he must perish, let me also be put to death." 'Your wish, in this respect,' said the king, 'may be easily gratified.' 'Alas!' cried Ferokh Suvar, 'if the father of this

youth, who was a king, or his mother, who was a queen, were informed of his situation, they would save him from this ignominious death.' The king laughed at the seeming inconsistency of Ferokh Suvar, and said, 'You told me at one time that Bakhtyar was your son; now you describe him as the child of royal parents.'

Ferokh Suvar, in reply, told all the circumstances of his finding Bakhtyar near the well, and shewed the cloak in which he had been wrapped. The king immediately knew it to be the same which he had left with the infant, and asked whether Ferokh Suvar had found any thing besides. He produced the bracelet of pearls—and the king, now convinced that Bakhtyar was not the son of Ferokh Suvar, but his own, took the cloak and the bracelets to the queen, and asked her if she had ever before seen them. She instantly exclaimed, 'They were my child's!—What tidings do you bring of him?' 'I shall bring himself,' replied the king; and immediately sent an order to the viziers that they should conduct Bakhtyar to the palace. When he arrived, the king, with his own hands, tore off his chains, placed a royal turban on his head, and covered him with the embroidered cloak, and then led him to the queen, saying, 'This is our son, whom we left on the brink of the well.' When the queen heard this, and beheld Bakhtyar, the milk gushed forth from her nipples. The king embraced the youth, who asked the queen why she had endeavoured to destroy him by a false accusation?

She immediately confessed that the viziers had induced her: on which the king ordered their immediate execution, and then resigned the throne to Bakhtyar, who was acknowledged sovereign by

all the people. Ferokh Suvar was invested with the dignity of chief vizier, and his companions rewarded with honourable appointments; and Bakhtyar continued for many years to govern with justice, wisdom, and generosity.

THE END.

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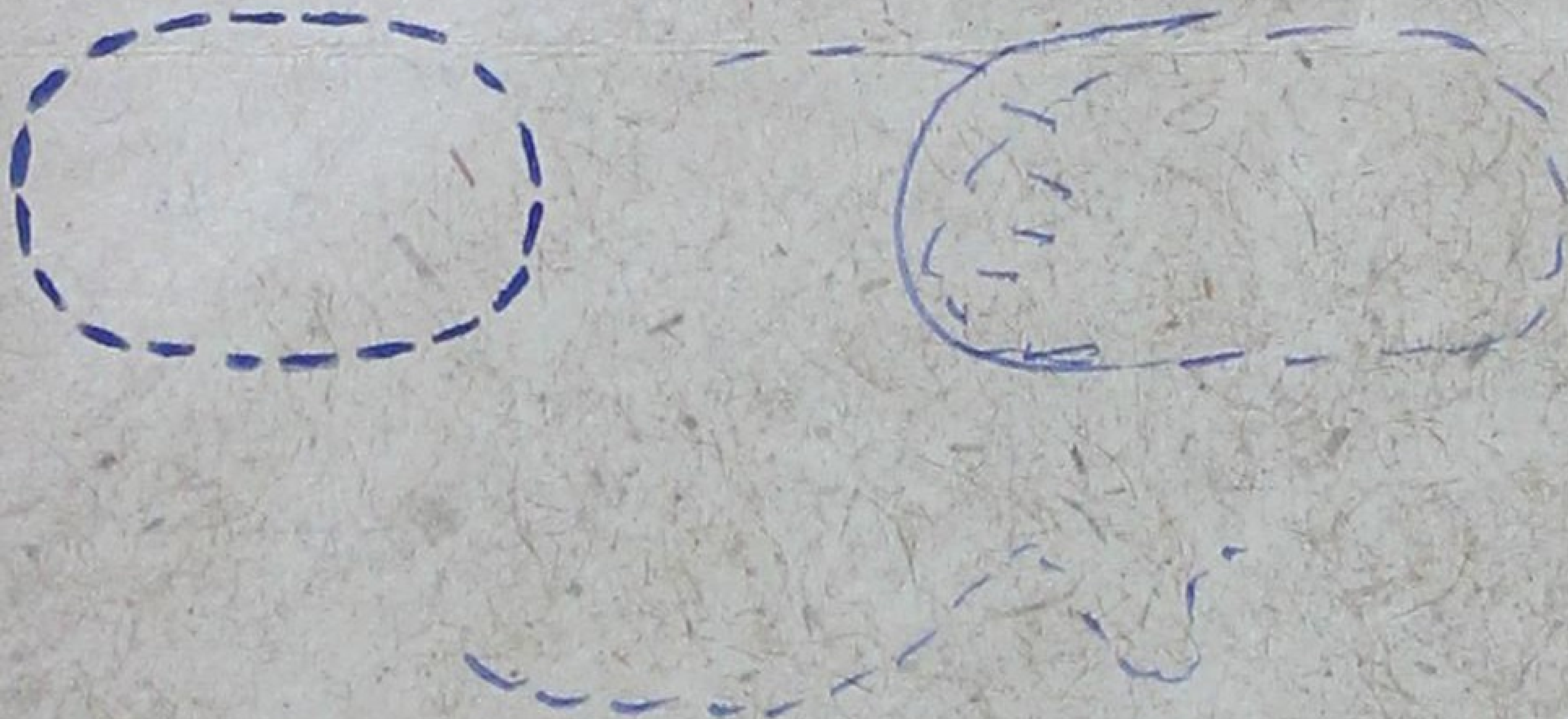
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